



STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
LANSING


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August 26, 2014

MEMORANDUM

TO: State Board of Education

FROM: Michael P. Flanagan, Chairman 

SUBJECT: Presentation on Transitional Models for Science Education

In recent months, the State Board of Education has heard from both Michigan Department of Education (MDE) specialists, and from the broader education community of the needs for increased engagement and depth of understanding in science for our students. Those that have shared their observations and experiences understand that students need to have greater literacy in science and engineering concepts to better understand their world and need to develop skills for a new economy that is more heavily dependent on Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) skills and expertise. There is a universal recognition of need throughout the state on these matters.

Last May, MDE staff began a series of presentations to map out the path to achieve these ends. A vision for science education was shared to provide a view of what the ends of this process might look like for a range of learners. Last month's presentation stepped backward from this end to show how educators and the state might assess progress toward this vision, and how to use practices at state, regional, building, and classroom levels to ensure that students and teachers are moving toward these ends. This month, the presentation will take another step back to address how the educators in classrooms throughout the state might transition from current practices toward the vision. By doing so, the presentation will not only build upon the Framework for Science Education and its strong research base on the practices of teaching and learning science; it will also address some of the details that often impede progress toward these ends. The intent is to provide a clearer picture of the challenges of implementing new practices and concepts, and the means to overcoming these challenges at both the state and local level.

Today's presentation is yet another part of the comprehensive picture of implementation considerations for new practices in teaching and new learning expectations for students in science education that are being reviewed by the State Board in 2014. This presentation will provide insight and discussion to better understand the needs and considerations to improve science education in Michigan, and will provide you a better base of information to effectively guide policy on these issues.

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